

Paul's Letter to the Romans:

THE PINNACLE OF
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT



The One True Promise Keeper

Romans 9:14-29

It seems to me that it is probably not a good thing to start off a lesson with an apology. However, I believe that it's important for you to understand something. My Dad, at the beginning of his lesson last week talked about an idea called, **"Experimental Calvinism."** Now, that term is used regularly by English and Scottish Reformed people. But it's not a term widely used by Americans. So when the term **"Experimental Calvinism"** is used, don't think it's Experimenting with Calvinism. What it really means is **"Experiential Calvinism"**. A few weeks ago, my Dad preached a sermon called, **"The Fifth Sparrow"**. After hearing that sermon, I think I finally and really understood, what **"experimental Calvinism"** is. It's a theology of the heart and mind. It's when a preacher or teacher is absorbed with the text, so much so, that it affects his mind, his will and his emotions. That's what it means when someone says, **"Experimental Calvinism"**, or **"Experiential Calvinism"**. Now, when I heard that sermon a few weeks ago, I remember sitting right over there, and thinking this to myself. **"Lord, make me like him. Make me like him. I want to be an experiential teacher like that. I want to be affected by the text, so much so, that the text invades my whole being."** But I must apologize to you that I am not yet that man, and I am not yet that teacher. But with God's help, maybe one day, I

will be. I am reminded of that great exchange between George Bernard Shaw and Winston Churchill.

George Bernard Shaw, the prolific playwright, cabled the following invitation to Winston Churchill: **Have reserved two tickets for my first night. Come and bring a friend if you have one. Shaw.**

To which Churchill replied: **Impossible to come first night. Will come second night, if you have one. Churchill.**¹

My Dad is in Flower Mound this morning filling the pulpit for Pastor Sherwood at Christ Presbyterian Church. So don't worry, he'll be back next week. Let's pray.

Father, we come to you this morning confessing to you our great need. Father we need and we desire that your Spirit will come now and take the things of Christ and make them real to our hearts. Blessed Spirit we plead for you to come and take the written word and since you are it's true author and therefore its infallible teacher, we pray for you to come and instruct us in the truth of your Son. Open the book we pray to see what you have accomplished on our behalf, In Christ. In whose name, we pray, Amen.

Her name is Jackie. Jackie is 20, and she's my Geology lab partner. She's been on her own ever since she left home at the age of 15 to live with her 17-year-old brother. She doesn't look like a typical godly feminine woman. Her hair is shaved around the sides, and spiked and dyed various colors of blue and black under bright blonde streaks. Jackie has lots of tattoos and she has a pierced lip, and pierced tongue. Even her nose and eyebrows and ears are pierced. Jackie is pretty messed up. She does drugs on the "**weekend**" she tells me, because she is so depressed and has "**no hope of a good life.**" (Her words not mine.) Jackie

has had lots of lovers. She has volunteered more than I wanted to know, as if to say, **“help me.”**

Jackie needs a lot of things. She needs a godly Christian influence in her life; she needs a Father who cares about her. Of course, what she really needs is..... mercy. You see Jackie is no different from me. We both have exactly the same problem.

Of course, I don't have all her piercings or tattoos and I haven't had a bunch of lovers. I didn't have an abusive father, but, still, we have the same problem. You see Jackie and I both have this issue of sin and God's abiding wrath and need the mercy of God that is found in Christ.

You see Paul's theme throughout the book has been to address that issue of how God has chosen to deal with sinners and the problem of His abiding wrath.

In the early part of Romans Paul laid out the issue so clearly. Men everywhere, he argued are guilty before God. And you know, it doesn't matter who you are. Jews and Gentiles, men, women, bald salesmen, or messed up students are all in the same boat. That is, they are under the abiding wrath of God and need God's mercy, chapter 1:18 says as much. But the good news, the best news that ever was, is that God has provided a safe harbor for us in Christ. Christ has provided what we need. He's got what we need and we can go to Him in faith and receive for ourselves what we need to put us in a right standing before God. We can't work it up ourselves. It's only when we realize, that we can't work it up but that we have to assume the attitude of a beggar and just receive it that we shall ever gain what we need. Here's why. When we trust in Christ we actually receive

Christ righteousness as a robe to cover our sin and shame. That has been Paul's message throughout Romans.

Of course, that has always been God's way in dealing with sinners. Paul was not teaching that the gospel of Christ was something new. Certainly Paul's gospel was not in conflict with any of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, Paul's gospel was the fulfillment of all that the Jews had hoped for. In chapter four, Paul explained that even Abraham was saved by faith alone and not by works. So the logic of Paul's argument there was, **"If Abraham was justified by faith apart from works, then all men who are to be saved must be justified by faith apart from works."**

But, and listen to me carefully here, therein lies the problem. You see, the Old Testament is chock full of promises made to Israel. And one of the central tenets of Paul's argument along the way was that the gospel was the ultimate fulfillment of all of God's promises to Israel and the patriarchs. But the nation of Israel didn't, for the most part, believe the gospel. So, does the fact that not all Jews are being saved mean that God somehow has broken his promises?

Can God be trusted because it seems on the surface that God broke his promises to the Jews?

I mean think about it this way?

- (1) God made wonderful promises to the nation of Israel through the prophets and the patriarchs.
- (2) God delivered His promise in the gospel through the redeeming work of Jesus.
- (3) And then the Jews rejected God's provision.

(4) What does that say about the faithfulness of God and whether or not God keeps His promises?

Now the way Paul answers that question is the heart of our study today. You see, Paul answered that question by saying that those promises were never intended for those who are just physical descendants of Abraham. Those promises were not intended for just ethnic Israel. Those promises were for spiritual Israel, which includes both Jews and Gentiles who have been elected to eternal life. And to prove his point, Paul gives the Romans a history lesson using the most important characters in Israel's own history. He used Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as examples and he did that to explain the doctrine of election. And nowhere was the doctrine of election more clearly seen than in the last example of Esau and Jacob. God clearly chose one twin boy over the other. The decision was made before the twins were born or had even done anything good or bad. The doctrine of election, then, is seen in the lives of these two boys even if we find it distasteful.

Obviously there are those who don't like the doctrine of election. To them, it seems unjust. To them it seems unfair. To them it seems like God abandoned His promises and if He abandoned His promises to the Jews does that mean He will abandon His promises to us. And those are the questions Paul is going to address this morning in our section of Romans 9. Paul is going to answer that question, the question of God's fairness, by simply saying our God is not only "*fair*" but that He is the one "**true promise keeper**". He always keeps his promise. He has never wavered to the left or the right. Here's our outline this morning.

- (1) **The purpose of God in election: is to show mercy (vs. 14-21).**
- (2) **The purpose of God's patience: is to show mercy (vs. 22-24).**
- (3) **The purpose of God in the salvation of Jews and Gentiles: is to show mercy (vs. 25-29).**

God has always had a remnant of his elect people. Throughout history this has been the case even when it didn't seem like it. Remember Elijah in 1st Kings 19, pouting after God has whipped all the prophets of Baal. God asked him, **"What's wrong with you Elijah"**. What does Elijah say? He says, **"I'm the only one left. All who used to serve you are gone."** So God took Elijah up to a mountain and said, Elijah, I have 7,000 people whom I have reserved who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Sometimes it seems like God hasn't kept his promises, and what we are going to see this morning is God in fact is the only true promise keeper. There is none like Him in terms of faithfulness.

But first Paul has to deal with that objection of whether or not the doctrine of election is just? Now there are those that think that Paul is not really talking about "election" in terms of the way we understand now after the Reformation. But I don't think that there is any doubt that that is just how he is speaking of it. Otherwise, what would there be to object to? Anyway, what we are going to see this morning is this:

God's Purpose in election: to show mercy.

Let's look at Romans 9:14.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:14**...What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!

As soon as Paul raises this objection to election, he immediately answers it with “May it never be.” In Greek it’s “me’genoito”. It’s a strong way to say, “**God forbid**”, as the KJV translates it. Larry Danner said it’s Paul’s mega no!

Now that kind of answer doesn’t suit many people. Many people when confronted with the doctrine of election for the first time don’t like Paul’s response.

Listen to Calvin on this point:

Monstrous surely is the madness of the human mind, that it is more disposed to charge God with unrighteousness than to blame itself for blindness.²

Surely as Dr. Boice says, “**If there were injustice in God, the universe would fly apart.**”³ But, what about this objection of injustice with God?

It’s always the objection to election isn’t it? First, let me say that to argue that God is somehow unjust because of election is nonsensical. Here is why. Election is mercy. It’s not justice. I have never met anyone who really wanted fairness. Some here may say, “**Oh but I do. I want fairness, I demand fairness.**” My friend be careful what you ask for! When Paul speaks of election, he speaks of mercy. Mercy is the withholding of judgment that is rightfully deserved. What criminal who has gotten away with his crime has cried out for justice? No one who rightly understands his or her state before God cries out for justice. Brothers and sisters, I don’t want justice. I don’t need justice! I need mercy! Election is mercy.

Well, some may say at this point, “**Yea, I know everyone really deserves hell but it just seems to me that God should show mercy to everyone.**”

Let me illustrate what I mean. Do you see the word, “should”. It means “must”, “ought”, or “necessary”. Is the word “should” in the realm of justice or mercy? You see when we ask the question, “shouldn’t God show mercy to everyone” we are in the realm of justice and out of the realm of mercy.

Brothers and sisters, election is mercy. Some may say here, “well how do you know he is speaking of mercy?” Look at verse 15.

^{NAS} Romans 9:15...For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

Paul quotes from Exodus 33. Now we won’t read it, but allow me to sum up the story for you.

God was kind to the people of Israel, and decided not to wipe them out at Mt. Sinai, for their idolatry with the golden calf incident. He sent an angel to lead them to the Promised Land. But Moses didn’t want to lead the people unless he was assured that God was doing the leading, not angels. So, Moses went to speak with God and he confessed his sin and the people’s sin. Then he pleaded with God to be with them, and God promised Moses that He would lead them. Then Moses said in Exodus 33:18, **“Show me your glory.”** But God told Moses that if Moses saw Him face to face, he would die, for no one can see God and live. But God did tell Moses, that He would reveal Himself to Moses by putting Moses in the cleft of the rock and hiding him there and covering the opening with His hand. Then God would cause His goodness to pass before Moses.

Then he says, in verse 19 of Exodus 33. **“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”**

You see, Paul mentions this revelation of the goodness of God as mercy. The very revelation of the goodness of God in Christ is mercy. Election is mercy. Paul is alluding to Exodus 33 and here's what he's saying. The fact that God even reveals His goodness to anyone is mercy! The fact that He doesn't wipe us all out is mercy! God saves sinners out of mercy, not justice. You don't want justice.

Then Paul makes a conclusion. Look at verse 16.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:16**...So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Verse 16 is very simply an inference made by Paul. It's an inference, but understand, it's an inspired inference. Paul infers, that not only is there no injustice with God, but there is an abundant amount of mercy with God.

So he logically makes a conclusion. Obviously salvation has nothing to do with man's desire or lack of desire to be saved, but salvation totally depends on God's desire to show mercy. You see there is both a negative and positive teaching here in verse 16. Negatively we are told that salvation doesn't depend on any of man's desire or effort. Salvation does not come because of man's will or by his works of righteousness. Positively, we are told that salvation comes from God.

I don't mean to belabor the point, but I want verse 16 to be clear. Paul says, "**it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs.**" First, the word for wills is, "**thelo**" in Greek, which means, "**to will**". It is an act of volition. The second word I want you to see in verse 16 is the word for "runs" which in Greek is "**trecho**" which means, "**to run**". It refers to a physical act of exertion. You see

these two words in verse 16 simply deny, that we are saved by any act of volition or physical act of our own.

We are saved by the volition and physical act of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We do not choose Christ. Romans 3:11, says, **“There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.”**

This does not even mean that people do not will and run. This does not mean that volition is out the window. Robert Haldane writes in his commentary on Romans:

It is true, indeed, that believers both will and run, but this is the effect, not the cause, of the grace of God being (assured) to them.⁴

You know this shouldn't sound foreign to you. Jesus said almost exactly the same thing in John 1:12-13.

^{NAS} **John 1:12**...But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Many stop upon reading at verse 12. But look at verse 13.

^{NAS} **John 1:13**...who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

All those who have received Him have the right to become children of God. But according to John, who are those who have received Him? Those who received him were not born of blood nor of the will of flesh or man but born of God.

The Great Reformed Baptist, Charles Spurgeon said this in his sermon on Romans 9:16.

According to the freewill scheme the Lord intends good, but he must wait like a lackey on his own creature to know what his intention is; God willeth good and would do it, but he cannot, because he has an unwilling man who will not have God's good thing carried into effect. What do ye, sirs, but drag the Eternal from his throne, and lift up into it that fallen creature, man; for man, according to that theory, nods, and his nod is destiny. ...I shrink with solemn awe and horror from that doctrine which makes the grandest of God's works-the salvation of man-to be dependent upon the will of his creature whether it shall be accomplished or not.⁵

You see what Paul has said so far is this. Can God be trusted? Absolutely. Is God unjust? Absolutely not. He's merciful. Election is mercy. It's not justice. You don't want justice. Paul has been arguing that God is in fact the one true promise keeper. And here's the proof, the sovereign mercy of God in election. God has the right to have mercy on anyone whom He chooses. That led the apostle to this conclusion in vs. 16, **"You see your salvation has nothing to do with your will, or your effort, but it only has to do with mercy of God which is found in Christ."**

You see the purpose of God in election, is to show his mercy.

Look at verses 17-18.

^{NAS} Romans 9:17...For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

In order to understand verse 17-18, we need to know the context of the quote. Israel was captive under Pharaoh, and the first six plagues that God sent on Egypt had already taken place, and God sent Moses back to Pharaoh to announce to Pharaoh, that the seventh plague was coming and it would be the worst of all.

God could have destroyed Pharaoh at anytime, but he dealt patiently with Pharaoh so that God's power might be fully comprehended by all.

Listen to God's conclusion in Exodus 9:15-16.

^{NAS} Exodus 9:15... "For *if by* now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth.¹⁶ But, indeed, for this cause I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power, and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

And that is exactly what happened. With every plague, God's power became more and more obvious and His sovereign name was proclaimed.

Listen to what James Boice says at this point.

*"The point of these chapters is that God raised Pharaoh to his high position of prominence and sustained him in it through the earlier plagues, so God might be glorified in his power. Paul's point in quoting the text is that God both acts this way and is right in so doing."*⁶

I freely admit this is a difficult thing to grasp. Here's what is clear. Here's what we know.

God is sovereign. He has an absolute independent right of doing whatever he pleases with His creation. God does not have to conform to the will of any man. God can either bestow salvation on his creation or he can withhold it, without impugning his character. As a matter of fact, most of the time when we get messed up it's because we ask the wrong question. The real question in all of this is not why does God choose some for eternal life and pass others by?

The real question, and the great mystery of the doctrines of grace is, **"Why does God save anyone?"**

The great Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon on this text and here is what he said.

“It is the will of God to manifest his sovereignty. And his sovereignty, like his other attributes, is manifested in the exercise of it. He glorifies his power in the exercise of his power. He glorifies his mercy in the exercise of his mercy. So he glorifies his sovereignty in the exercise of his sovereignty.”⁷

You see I think Paul is diffusing that one thing that is so inherent in all of us. Paul is laying the axe at the root of the problem that all men, women, and children are born with. That problem is, “**damnable pride.**”

Of all people beloved, who are we to be prideful?

Paul confronts us with the mercy of God, by showing that were it not for the electing, predestinating love of God, we too would be... would be nothing.

Brothers and sisters of all people, we who claim the name “**reformed**”, we of all people should know that if He treated us as our sins deserve, we all would spend eternity in hell.

I have often wondered why is it that God has chosen me? Why? Why is it that God has bestowed on me His electing, predestinating love? Why is it that God has not passed over me, but has reached down in time and space and changed my wicked heart so that I may see the beauty of Christ? Why is it that I would be born in a household of faith? Why is it that I, wretched sinner that I am, have Christ righteousness imputed to my account? I look at my own heart, and I see the pride and the corruption within me, and if were not for the fact that he doesn't treat me as my sins deserve, I would be undone. Life would be meaningless. Why is it that God has chosen me? Why is it that it pleased God to

save me? There is nothing in me that merits me having his love, I ought to be damned for all eternity but God has brought me by His grace and by His love to Himself.

Why? I don't know why other than to say, with Wesley,

Tis mercy all immense and free, for O my God it found out me. Amazing love! How can it be that thou my God shouldst die for me.⁸

You see...

The purpose of God in the election of sinners is to mercy.

Look at verses 19-21.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:19...** You will say to me then, **"Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"** ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, **"Why did you make me like this,"** will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?

Some who do not like the argument from Paul will naturally raise the objection **"That if God is as sovereign as you say, then how is it that I am still to blame? Obviously, I can't go up against a sovereign God? Why am I still to blame? Isn't He to blame?"**

I find this particular objection in verse 19, telling. Here is where the heart of man becomes so obvious. Have you ever noticed that when the sovereignty of God cannot be denied, the normal person will then try to deny his own responsibility? These were my own objections when confronted with the doctrine of election the first time. **"Why does God still blame me? It's his fault? How can I be**

blamed?" That's the question that Paul answers. But I want you to notice how Paul answers the question. He doesn't give a lengthy explanation of a supposed dichotomy between the will of God and the responsibility of man as so many do. No, his answer it's simple enough. Who are you to talk back to God?

Then Paul uses three analogies to show how ridiculous it is to ask that question of God. Paul uses three different contrasts to show how ridiculous it is to ask, **"Why does God still blame us?"**

Did you notice the first contrast? Did you notice the glaring contrast of the two words, **"man"** and **"God"**? Paul reminds us that we are but mere mortals, ignorant, sinful mortals who have no right to question God. He makes another contrast at the end of verse 20. The thing molded and the molder. It's almost as if Paul compares us to something like plastic. We are something that is like hot melted plastic that is poured into a mold and cooled off. We don't and we can't turn to our molder and say, "why is it that I took on the shape of Tupperware?" You see the ridiculousness of the question that Paul is hammering home. There is one more contrast. The contrast is potter and clay, and could this contrast be any more obvious? Paul is silencing those who object to God condemning them for their sin.

If God obliterated us all, who could dare say that it would not be appropriate, considering the full extent of our sin. If God decided to forever sentence us to our justly deserved punishment in Hell would it not be appropriate considering how we have treated our neighbors? If God decided to send us to Hell, would it not be appropriate, considering our treatment of Christ the Lord?

Our condemnation would be just. Our mouths should be silenced. We have nothing to say in response. Who are we to talk back to God?

You see Paul doesn't explain the why of election? He doesn't set out to prove election. Understand this. He assumes the facts of election. Paul simply and plainly uses the doctrine of election to answer the question, "**Can God be trusted?**" Paul's answer, absolutely! The doctrine of election proves it. God is absolutely merciful to sinners who deserve nothing but wrath. Out of His own good mercy, God has chosen to set His saving affection on some while allowing others to reap what they have sown. But why would God do that? Why?

Because the purpose of God's patience, is to show mercy.

Look at verse 22-24.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:22**...What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ And *He did so* in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ *even us*, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

There are two groups in the world and there will always be two groups in the world: those who glorify God in their rebellion, and those who glorify God in their redemption.

As Boice says:

Every person who has ever lived or will ever live must glorify God, either actively or passively, either willingly, or unwillingly, either in heaven or in hell.⁹

It seems to me that it is easy to understand how God is glorified in my redemption. Surely when a reprobate sinner like me has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, that brings God glory. But is God glorified in the rebellion of sinners?

I tell you this with no pleasure. If you are here this morning, and you remain unconverted, and you refuse to trust Christ, then God is glorified in your rebellion even now. God could send you to hell immediately, but the fact that He hasn't is proof of his patience, and his patience, brings Him glory.

I think this is what Paul is getting at in verses 22-24. God is patient with sinners, who deserve hell, and his patience brings him glory.

His patience with the wicked brings him glory, and his patience shows those of us, who have experienced his mercy, how great and worthy to be praised our merciful God is. The good news is that God is patient with both Jews and Gentiles.

Brothers and Sisters, the fact that we are not in hell now, means that God has been patient with us. **The purpose of the patience of God is to show his abundant mercy.** And God is patient with all kinds of people, Jews and Gentiles. Which leads us to our last point.

The purposes of God in the salvation of Jews and Gentiles, is to show mercy.

Look at verse 25-29.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:25-29...**As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'" ²⁶"And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them,

'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." ²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, **"Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;** ²⁸ **for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly."** ²⁹ And just as Isaiah foretold, **"Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."**

Paul is back to his overall point of Romans 9. That is, has God been faithful to Israel? Some Jews are obviously lost and dying in their sins, and the Gentile audience in Rome was asking the question, **"Can God be trusted? How do we know we can trust Him? It seems that he has abandoned the Jews. How do I know he won't abandon me?"**

How does Paul respond? He says, in verses 25 –29, that He has chosen to save, his elect from Jews and even Gentiles. He uses four quotations from the Old Testament. The quotes I want to focus on are the two from Hosea in verse 25. Do you remember the story of Gomer and Hosea? God told Hosea to take for himself a wife who was a prostitute, whose name was Gomer. She was unfaithful to Hosea, and what a picture that is of how faithful our God is and how unfaithful we are. That is the picture I think Paul is going for. He's telling this Roman church, beloved, you can count on God. God had even made sure that the prophecies of the Gentiles being included into His family were fulfilled. So Paul says, to his brothers and sisters in Rome. Beloved, do you want to know if God can be trusted? Do you want to know if you can count on the faithfulness of God. Know that God has freely chosen to save you by His wondrous electing love. That election is mercy, it is abundant, glorious mercy.

You can count on God, you can trust in His faithfulness, because God has and will save everyone He has ever intended to save, and beloved, Paul says, that's

you. God has chosen to save even Gentiles. Count on Christ, He has chosen to save you. **He didn't forget His promises, He keeps His promises.** He doesn't waiver in faithfulness, no, He saves despite our unfaithfulness. He is the Savior of men and women, yes, it is Christ who saves, and that is none of our doing. That's what He means in verse 28.

^{NAS} **Romans 9:28**...for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly."

Our Lord can be trusted. He has accomplished and will accomplish all He has ever intended. Look at verse 29 again,

^{NAS} **Romans 9:29**...And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."

If it were not for the mercy of God, we too would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Let me ask you this morning, are you struggling with whether or not God can be trusted? Will He do what He said He would do? Let me remind you again of the mercy and faithfulness of God. . Let me remind you that God has not treated us as our sins deserve. Let me remind you again of the mercy of God. Hear this from the lips of our Savior Himself.

^{NAS} **John 6:37**..."All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

Or this one.

^{NAS} **Titus 3:5a**...He saved us, not on the basis of deeds, which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy,

Brothers and sisters, the purpose of God in election is to show mercy. The purpose of God's patience is to show mercy. The purpose of God in saving Jews and Gentiles is to show mercy. Our salvation starts with Him, and it is entrusted to Him, and He will never ever falter and He will never fail. Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ, the one true promise keeper in all the world.

¹ Reader's Digest, May 2003, pge 182. *Funny Letters From Famous People*

² Calvin, *The Ages Digital Commentary, Romans A commentary*, pge. 274.

³ Boice, *Romans Vol. 3 A Commentary*, pge. 1069

⁴ Robert Haldane, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (MacDill AFB: MacDonald Publishing, 1958), p. 468. The word "assured" was inserted instead of the word "vouchsafed by T.G.B.

⁵ Spurgeon, Charles, *Ages Digital Spurgeon Collection: A sermon preached on March 30th, 1862, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.*

⁶ Boice, *Romans Vol. 3 A Commentary*, pge. 1094

⁷ Jonathan Edwards, "Seventeen Occasional Sermons: Sermon IV" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, Pa; The Banner of Truth Trust 1976), vol 2, page 850.

⁸ Wesley, Charles *And Can it Be: The Trinity Hymnal* page 455.

⁹ Boice, *Romans Vol. 3 A Commentary*, pge. 1108